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HOW REBIRTH TAKES PLACE

By DR. LUANG SURIABONGS, Bangkok.

ALTHOUGH we cannot find any direct answer in the Pali Texts how Rebirth takes place, there are many passages which are closely related to this question, allowing us to draw a picture how presumably Rebirth is effected. The Suttas referring to the process of Rebirth are the following :—*The Milinda Panha*, *The Maha Tanha Sankhya Sutta*, *The Mahanidana Sutta*, *The Payasi Sutta*, *The Kevattha Sutta*, *The Acchariyabbhuta Dhamma Sutta*, and *The Visuddhi Magga XII*, *XVI*, and *XVII*.

From the Milinda-Panha and other sources we learn that all the Five Groups of Grasping are extinguished at death. Therefore none of these but the disembodied psychical individuality, karmically conditioned during the previous life or lives continues from life to life. Therefore the Residual Karma left inexhausted at the moment of death continues to condition the psychical individuality of the dead as a "being to be born" as "Ghandhabba" whose blind presence at the moment of conception provides the seed of life or consciousness which arises in dependence on Sankhara or Karmic Formation, as the third link in the Chain of Causation. For this reason it is also called the Rebirth-Consciousness (Pathisandhi-Vinnana) in spite of the fact that it drifts or gravitates unconsciousness in complete ignorance towards conditioned elements or fertilized ovum having karmic affinity with its karmic attributes at the moment of conception known as, Sankhara or Karmic Formation . . . Thus in dependence or Ignorance it goes through the process of Rebirth over again till it is born as a new baby.

Once born it begins to show expression of Thirst or Craving, like or dislike, which become more and more manifest as it grows older and begins to exert its conscious will in various circumstances or karmic surroundings. Thus committing or refraining from deeds of merit or demerit as it lives on, and so varying its own attributes which form its character in life and qualify it karmically for better or worse future rebirth or conditioned existence in any world of becoming which it deserves.

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Therefore avoid evil deeds, banish passions and see the Five Groups of Grasping, namely—Form, Sensation, Perception, Thoughts and Consciousness as conditioned and of the nature of "Trilaknana" *i.e.*,—Impermanent—subject to Change and Suffering, and not the Self or the observing subject. Thus seeing and knowing, the perfected one is freed and able to regard the physical corporeality as a heap of suffering without himself figuring as the sufferer. The perfected one is freed from all karmic attributes and so from all Karma, and is able to regard the function of the physical corporeality as not his own action. The perfected one realizes Nibbana at the moment of his Enlightenment and knows that it is unconditioned, unconceived having realized that all phenomena, all things conditioned and conceived are not self. The perfected one could review the Path without a vision of himself in it. That is why every Arahat on his enlightenment intuitively realizes thus : "I am now blessed with absolute deliverance and riddance of all grasping ; birth is for me at an end, my holy life is accomplished. What was to be done has been done ; there is no more for me to do to be so blessed as I am now. Hence it is said in the Visuddhimagga :—

"Mere suffering exists, no sufferer is found ;
The deed is, but no doer of the deed is there ;
Nibbana is, but not the man that enters it ;
The Path is, but no traveller on it is seen."

It teaches that everything is transient, miserable and not self-contained or without a permanent Self. All phenomena of life, *i.e.*, the whole Universe is subject to change, becoming this then that without a perceivable break in it. "All is in a flux, nothing is, but only *Becoming*, put together, unstable, without permanent substance," says the Buddha.

Man has no abiding principle in his conditioned existence, no permenent self, but consists of an individual life-stream composed by his life-generating will-actions (Karma) which are the cause of being born again and again. Man suffers because of his ignorance of the true facts of life, *i.e.* "The Triple Characteristics of Life", which cause the delusion of self and the craving for existence. He only suffers because of not knowing, not understanding that suffering comes to be. Therefore all life is suffering, says the Buddha.

It is the Buddha's solution of the origin of suffering ; His answer to the riddles of life ; His explanation of all phenomena of life. The Chain of Causation consists of following twelve links :—

In Dependence of Ignorance Arises Sankhara or Karmic Formation.—The ignorance concerned is ignorance of suffering, its cause, its cessation and the path that leads to its cessation, found here and now in every sentient being. In short—ignorance of the Four Noble Truths. Ignorance is the cause of our blind involvement in the conditioning of conditioned elements which constitute the embryo. It is called Sankhara or Karmic formation.

In Dependence on Sankhara Arises Consciousness.—Involvement in the conditioning of conditioned elements evolves another conditioned element called Consciousness.

In dependence on Consciousness Arises Name and Form or Psycho-Physicality.—At this stage a rudimentary form of life begins its development.

In Dependence on Name and Form or Psycho-Physicality Arise the Six-Sense-Spheres.—At this stage the rudimentary form of life is further developed into a complicated corporeal form with six-sense-organs or physical fields of consciousness known as the six-sense-spheres.

In Dependence of the Six-Sense-Spheres Arises Contact.—It is through the six-sense-spheres and consciousness that our contact with sense objects is possible.

In Dependence of Contact Arises Sensation.

In Dependence on Sensation Arises Craving.

In Dependence on Craving Arises Grasping or Attachment.

In Dependence on Grasping or Attachment Arises Becoming.

In Dependence on Becoming Arises Birth.

In Dependence on Birth Arises Old Age, Disease, Death and All Suffering.

Every individual, once born is subject to old age, death, pain and all suffering so obvious to us all.

We are not what we grasp at or cling to, but involved in it, now becoming this and then that. Life is in a flux, a process of psycho-physical phenomena conditioned by Karma and driven on by passions and delusion in the "Cycle of Rebirth". Therefore to put an end to all suffering we must break the Chain of Causation and prevent rebirth by guarding every door of our senses, subduing our passions (Greed, Hate, Craving and Delusion), stilling our mind for meditative inspection into the Five Groups of Grasping so as to see *Form, Sensation, Perception, Thoughts* and *Consciousness* as conditioned and of the nature of Trilakhana, *i.e.* Im- permanent—subject to change and suffering and not ourselves. Looking at them objectively and constantly in his way will reveal their true nature and destroy the view of selfness and possessive self-view of them. When this is accomplished our Delusion and Craving will be extinguished and the Chain of Causation broken therewith, leaving us freed from all grasping and therefore from future Becoming and Rebirth.

When freed the knowledge will come to us intuitively, that we are freed and blessed with absolute tranquility, the Supreme Bliss of Nibbana.

Therefore for peace and wellbeing in this life and the next, for better understanding or for complete enlightenment and Nibbana, study the Teachings of the Buddha and live and act in the light of Dhamma.

The Buddha-Dhamma is timeless Truth, and its moral principles of avoiding evil, of fulfilling virtues and of purifying the mind for wisdom, for enlightenment and deliverance are the greatest gift ever offered to mankind.

Therefore I go to the Buddha, the Dhamma and to the Sangha for guidance.

Nibbana is the goal of every Buddhist. It is not annihilation, but extinction of Greed, Hate and Delusion ; the extinction of Becoming, Birth, Old Age, Death and all suffering. It is the attainment to highest wisdom, in the light of which all our spiritual problems, our doubts and fears will solve themselves and disappear as we gradually emerge from the darkness of ignorance into the light of the absolute reality. Nibbana is the consummation of man's struggle for emancipation. It is the Deathless State, the Absolute Peace.

In the Holy Pali Scriptures, in the Udana Chapter VIII (74) it is said:—

"For the one that has support there is trembling, for the one who is not supported, there exists no trembling. Where there is no trembling there is tranquility, where there is tranquility, there is no tendency. Where there is no tendency, there is no coming, no going. Where there is no coming, no going, there is no disappearing and re-appearing, there is neither a "here" nor a "there" nor anything between both. And just this is the extinction of suffering."

MR. FRITZ KUNZ

To those many readers who have asked for the address of Mr. F. L. Kunz, former Principal of Ananda College, who contributed an article to our March issue:—

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WAS BUDDHAGHOSA A BRAHAMIN?

Asks Pandit J. SAMARAJEEWA

(*Lecturer, Alexandra College, Colombo*)

THE accepted account of the life of Buddhaghosa is in the Mahavamsa (Chap. XXXvii, verses 215—246) of which the following is a summary :—

" Born near the Bodhi tree (near Buddha Gaya) a young Brahamin controversialist well versed in all branches of the arts, in the Vedas and in the doctrines of various sects, wandered about India for the purpose of debate. As he arrived one night at a Buddhist monastery and had given a clear exposition of the doctrine of Patanjali, his arguments were refuted by a Mahathera named Revata. On the other hand the young Brahamin was unable to follow the Buddhist's arguments and finally asked for instruction.

He entered the novitiate, learning and accepting the three Pitakas. The name Buddhaghosa was given to him, because his voice was deep like the Buddha's. In the Vihara where he was converted he composed a treatise called " Nanodaya ;" wrote the " Atthasalini " commentary upon the Dhammasangini ; and finally undertook a short commentary on the Tripitaka, where upon the Thera Revata spoke :

"Only the texts, not the commentaries have been brought here (from Sri Lanka) ; the traditions of the various teachers are not available. However, in Sri Lanka, the authoritative and quite orthodox commentaries (like the Mahapaccariya, ' Pasana ' and Kurunda atuwas and the like) compiled by the Rev. Mahinda and other illustrious Hela commentators are extant in the pure Sinhala language. Go there, study them, translate them into the Magadhi language. They will benefit all."

So Buddhaghosa arrived in Ceylon in the reign of King Mahanama. In the Mahapadana Hall of the Mahavihara he heard the Sinhala commentators and the Theravada tradition from the Rev. Sangapala. It seemed to him the doctrine of the Buddha. But, when he demanded access to all the books in order to write a commentary, the Order gave him two stanzas as a test.

Upon these, he wrote the Visuddhimagga, an epitome of the three Pitakas with commentaries. At the first reading of this work, the Gods hid the book away and repeated the performance, after he had done the work again. The third time, the deities produced the former copies to show the people his skill. And there was found after comparing the three books, not the least variation from the Theravada, in composition, in meaning, in sequence, nor even in the very letters.

He was immediately acclaimed by the Order as a veritable Metteyya Bodhisatta and the Atthakathas were given to him. Living in that pure vihara rich in all such books, he translated them from Sinhala into the " Original " language, Magadhi. This work benefited people of all languages ; all the teachers of the Theravada honoured it as e sacred text. Thus having finished his task Buddhaghosa returned to the land of his birth to reverence the Great Bodhi tree.

This account so stated is subject to criticism. Buddhaghosa could not be a native of Buddha Gaya. As a negative proof, we do not find that the scene of a single one of his numerous contemporary stories is set in Magadha. In the tale of Visakha (Visuddhimagga X, 64—69) who migrated from Pataliputra, the starting-point is in Ceylon not Magadha. In all his works there is no description of North India such as an eye-witness would give. More positive evidence is in the passage- " Unhassata aggisantapassa. Tassa Vanadahadisu sambhavo veditabbo" (Visuddhimagge—1, 86). " Heat: the heat of fire, such as occurs at the time of a forest fire, etc.," this is a comment upon the protection against heat given by a " Civara." It is not known to Indian Southerners that a bare skin sometimes blisters in the northern summer.

Buddhaghosa could not have been a Brahamin. From vedic times virtually every Brahamin has been expected to know the famous " Purusukta hymn :

Brahmanosya mukham asid,
bahu rajanyah krtah ;
Uru tad asya yad vaishyah,
padbhyam sudro ajayata.

(*'Atharveda, xix*, 6, 6).

" Brahamin was his mouth, Ksatriya his arms, Vaisya his thighs, Sudra was born of his feet." Yet, Buddhaghosa, supposed to be a learned and erudite Brahamin was not accquainted with this. Commenting on " Bandhupadapacca " —"Children of Brahmas feet "—he says, " The Brahamin's are of this opinion : Brahamins came out of Brahma's mouth, Ksatriyas from his breast, Vaisyas from his navel, Sudras from the legs, and Sramanas from his soles." (*Vide* stanzas " Rtum " vai . . . .and the like in Mahabaratha Adi, 83, 33-34).

The word " Bhunahu " occurs in Pali as " Brhunaha " in Brahamanical literature to signify " embryo-killer " (*Vide* M. Atth, III, 131, p. G. Munaden Pitaka press edition).

In the " Magandiya Sutta " (M, 1, 502) Magandiya reproaches the Buddha as a " Bhrunaha," for having ceased to have intercourse with his wife. It is clear and patent from his comment that Buddhaghosa did not understand the real meaning of this word. He explains it as " Hatavadi " Mariyadakaraka. Finally it is also to be noticed that Buddhaghosa makes fun of the Brahamins (Visuddhimagga, 1, 93). This in itself is inconclusive as it might be the jeering of an apostate. Of Patanjali or any northern tradition, Buddhaghosa knew virtually little. Out of all Patanjali, only the terms " anima " and " laghima " are mentioned (Visuddhimagga, vii, 61) without any further knowledge of the " Yogasutra." There is no comparative study, nor even a single reference, to the work or name of Patanjai. The term " Prakrti-vada " (' Sankhya ') is mentioned in the 17th Chapter where a rudimentary acquaintance with Nyaya, the Indian system of logic is shown by reference to the structure of a syllogism all his knowledge of the other sects does not exceed that of a learned Sinhalese monk or of a southern Bhikkhu of about the 11th century A.D. (such as Anuruddha or Dhammapala). The methods, principles, or even the existence of the great Mahayana teachers such as Nagarjuna and Aswaghosa seem to be unknown to him. He does mention epics " Ramayana " and " Mahabaratha " without showing any familiarity with them.

Accordingly, the great part of the Mahavamsa story appears to be legendary. It is said that the "Atthasalini" was written by Buddhaghosa in India. From the style, context and the introduction, it is doubtful whether Buddhaghosa wrote the book. That he could have written it before the Visuddhimagga is impossible since the Vissuddhimagga is referred to in the opening stanzas of the "Atthasalini." Whoever wrote that part of the Mahavamsa had not opened the "Atthasalin". That Buddhaghosa while desiring access to the commentaries should prove his fitness to work upon them by epitomising the Pitakas together with their commentaries is surprising. It is noteworthy to make mention in this connection that Buddhaghosa on the "persuasions" and "incitations" of some monk of the Mahavihara, introduced in his canonical works some Theravadic views (*Vide* "Paramathajotik". *re* the stanzas based on the construction of Uddesika Chaityas and the like). If the Mahavamsa chronicler did try to verify the legend about Buddhaghosa by examining Buddhaghosa's works he got no further than the two "fundamental" stanzas at the beginning of the Vissuddhimagga. If the "Nanodaya" had existed it alone would not have been lost while all the other works of Buddhaghosa survive. It is nowhere mentioned in Pali literature, the Mahavamsa excepted. From the narrative of Mahavamsa one fact remains: that Buddhaghosa came from India to Sri Lanka in the reign of King Mahanama (end of the 4th century A.D.). This is confirmed by the Burmese authorities; but, the latter say that he went to Ceylon from Thaton being a Talaing by birth.

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SOME THOUGHTS ON THE MEDITATION OF UNIVERSAL LOVE

By ARTHUR De SILVA, Panadura

IN contemplating on the Buddha, the first thought that strikes a Buddhist is His Supra-Normal Wisdom which enabled Him to pierce the dark veil and gain an insight into the ultimate view of all that pervades the universe which enabled him to break that otherwise endless chain of births and deaths and pass into the Eternal Peace of Nibbana. But both Buddhists and non-Buddhists normally think first of the Buddha and His teaching in terms of the boundless Love He preached and practised, and in their impact with Asiatic Buddhist countries. Their first impression is the peaceful kindly expressions on the faces of the people and in their hospitality to strangers.

This is the result of centuries old practice of meditation on *Maitri* (Universal Love) which they did more often than the other meditations.

Some three hundred years ago, Robert Knox, the English sailor captive, who escaped from Ceylon after twenty years of captivity, though well treated, wrote about the olden day Sinhalese that they were not revengeful, that their temper is shortlived, that they seldom shed blood in a quarrel, that it is not usual for them to fight with each other and that thieving is the least of their crimes, which however is abhorrent to them.

Foreigners to Ceylon (and to other Asiatic Buddhist countries) often write about their pleasant faces and their ingrained sense of hospitality.

This form of meditation can be practised on all occasions, even when there is little leisure, when the railway train is late, till one falls asleep, when one wakes up in the middle of the night, when walking in one's garden, or seated.

Eleven beneficial results of this form of meditation are mentioned in the cannonical books :—

1. *Sukhaṃ supati*—sleeps peacefully.
2. *Sukhaṃ patibujjati*—awakes peacefully.
3. *Napāpakaṃ Supinan passati*—disturbing dreams do not occur.
4. *Manussānaṃ piyo hoti*—pleasing to others.
5. *Amanussānaṃ piyo hoti*—pleasing to evil spirits.
6. *Devatā Rakkhati*—protected by the higher spirits (Devas).
7. *Nāssa aggi vā sattaṃ va khamati*—No untoward accidents happen from fire or weapons.
8. *Thuvataṃ cittaṃ samādhiyati*—concentration is possible quickly.
9. *Mukhavaṇṇo vippasidati*—the face takes a pleasing expression.
10. *Asanmulho kālankaroti*—death takes place in full possession of the senses.
11. *Uttariṃ appati vijjanto brahmalokupago hoti*—if the stage of sainthood (*arahantship*) is not reached during life, is born in a *Brahmaloka* (highest sphere).

There is hardly a sil campaign in Ceylon where this form of meditation is not practised. These are generally held only till dusk owing to difficulties of accommodation in the bana preaching halls for men and women devotees. Besides, daytime is not suited for meditation owing to distracting noises. Also owing to other activities the time allotted to each meditation at the sil campaigns is very limited.

Owing to these reasons, there are shortcomings in the meditations done at sil campaigns. The chief defect is the speed. No form of meditation is a mere incantation *mantra*). In an incantation, all that is needed is accurate incantation, and the requisite number of repititions, be it 7, 108, or 1000. Meditation is totally different. Usually it need not be audible. Yet, the mind should throughout be concentrated on the subject matter. The greater the concentration, the greater the effect. That is why the Omniscient One declared "*Mano pubbangamā dhammā, Manō settā manomayā.*" The mind is the first feature, the mind is the chief thing, the mind is all. He also declared

that "karma" is but a mental process. (*Cetanāhaṃ bhikkhave kammaṃ vadāmi.*")

Therefore to obtain the best results for meditation it should be done calmly, quietly and with full concentration of the mind. The time so spent is not wasted. To obtain the best results from paddy cultivation one must exert oneself. If just any sort of paddy is sown on a neglected field, the yield is bound to be poor. As stated in the *Dhammapada* as one sows does one reap. "*Yādisaṃ vapate bījaṃ, Tādisaṃ harate phalaṃ.*" To obtain the best yield from a neglected field, it should be irrigated, cultivated with the harrow, the surface smoothed, and selected seed paddy sown.

The formula "May I be free from worries, be rid of ailments, be happy ; May those who love me be free from worries, be rid of ailments, be happy ; May strangers to me be free of worries, be rid of ailments and be happy ; May my enemies be free from worries, be rid of ailments, and be happy" should not merely be repeated like a parrot. It should come from the depth of the heart. Each word in the formula should be uttered concentrating on its meaning. When a person says "May I be free from worries" he should think of his actual worries. Similarly about his ailments and the obstacles to his happiness. And this should be done in repeating the formula in respect of those who love him, as far as their worries, ailments and shortcomings to their happiness are known to him. As regards strangers, this is not possible, and in meditating on strangers, one must, while repeating the formula, think "They too would like to be free from worries, be rid of ailments, and be happy. May they be thus free of worries, be rid of ailments, and the happy."

Meditation of love to enemies presents a problem. That is why this meditation is placed last. Psychology teaches us why it is difficult to love an enemy. The very thought of an enemy brings to mind dormant feelings of resentment for past wrongs. Anger towards the enemy is the result. It has been found that the saliva of an enraged person contains a poison, a small quantity of which can kill a mouse. This poison has been found even in the condensed air exhaled by an enraged person. It is a provision of nature inherited by man from the animal world where a victim meets with quick death from a bite. The old folks have realised this from experience of the race and there is a village saying that the bite of a rat which has fought with another and fallen from the roof is specially poisonous and results in leukoderma. Hunters are attacked by wild animals, and poisonous reptiles pass hermits in the jungle harmlessly. It is apposite to remember that a kind word turns away wrath. A police Sergeant with notebook and pencil was awaiting a crowd of youths across the width of the Turret Road in Colombo on an inter-collegiate cricket match day in violation of a strict rule of the road. A thoughtful youth at the forefront saved the situation by shouting out "Cheerio uncle !" as he approached the Sergeant. The latter felt shy, looked down with a smile and put the note book back into his pocket as the cyclists passed him in the same wild disorder.

Thus, there is no room for thought of love where anger is present, so the approach should be gradual, with a change of heart. It would be difficult at first but an honest effort should be made in a real Buddhist spirit. It must at first be generally about those who bear illwill towards us, and not about particular individuals. One must think "they acted like children in ignorance of the law of Cause and Effect (*karma*). Nothing happens without cause ; I have probably given cause, may be unwittingly, may be in this life, may be in some former existence. I have repaid my debt and I am now free. It is not their fault. May they be free of worries, be rid of ailments and be happy".

It need hardly be mentioned that the practice of Maitri should not be restricted to the time of meditation but be continued throughout in every moment of wakefulness and be applied on all occasions which call for it.

HOMAGE TO MY MASTER

By J. P. PATHIRANA

Sakyamuni the All Enlightened One ;
The Buddha Supreme equal to none
His Dhamma extolled—the soothing balm,
For this international headache of hate and harm.

We take refuge in thee Master fine
Bow in veneration at your feet supine,
The Path of Nibbana *via* the Golden Mean
And Four Noble Truths, the go-between.

Dhamma so fine, refine and pure,
Gave the "Light" to mankind—a path so sure ;
All the Worlds' Ills and the suffering will go
'Tis the Teachings of the Master, we all should know.

O' Master so calm and serene
Your Compassionate looks make so pure and clean;
With downcast eyes, in meditation deep
Radiating kindness in blissful sleep.

To young Rahula, even your shadow was great,
Amongst Buddhists everywhere—Happiness you create,
Thy guiding "star" to the Path of Salvation
Homage do we pay in bow and veneration.

"Geetani,"
Jayanthipura,
Talangama.

BUDDHISM SEEKS MEANING OF LIFE IN LIFE ITSELF

By His Excellency Professor

G. P. MALALASEKERA,

Ceylon's Ambassador in the U.S.S.R.

THE principle of non-injury which became a fundamental tenet of the Buddha's teaching contains all that is required to build up a charter of human rights in this modern age.

Non-injury means that you must not be guilty of injury to anyone, including yourself.

That injury cannot be merely physical—harming them by dropping bombs on them or by other forms of violence—but to deprive them of their rights or privileges.

Whether it be theft by colonialism or theft by rulers of land, levying unjust taxes or the theft which takes away from a person the right to cast his vote free from fear or anxiety, all these things are theft. That is injury, said the Buddha.

It is significant that great interest is now being taken in the teachings of the Great Sage who lived more than 25 centuries ago.

It is remarkable how after all these years mankind is beginning to wake once more to the teaching He gave the world such a long time ago. It has come like a new breath to the world.

Already a fifth of the world's population has accepted the teachings of the Buddha and a very large number of those who are not followers of the Buddha are Hindus, who follow teachings very closely akin to Buddhism.

It is very difficult to differentiate Hinduism and Buddhism as two systems of thought. Together they constitute a force which can achieve a great deal for the pece and happiness of the world.

We are probably at the beginning of a new era of peace amongst men and there are prophesies in several Buddhist countries that at this time such a new age would begin.

There has been a revival of Buddhism in India. When the first independent Indian Cabinet took office they did so in the shadow of the great Buddhist statue which was perhaps the first one to be found on Indian soil.

When Asia, after having lain dormant for nearly five centuries, is once more taking its due place in the world and bids fair to be the leader of the new age it is significant that Buddhism, which, more than any other force, was responsible for the great civilisations and great cultural influences of that continent, should also be coming back to its rightful place.

The Buddha was the first great scientist to appear among men. The Buddha discovered what scientists have only now discovered, that there is nothing called matter or mind existing separately in this world but they are the result of forces which continually cause them to come into operation and that they dissolved and came into operation again.

The Five Precepts of Buddhism are beginning to be adopted as the basis not only of the life of the individual but also the life of international society.

These precepts are to show sanctity for what belong to other people; to show due regard in the satisfaction of human desires and not to be guilty of over-indulgence; not to take from the world more than one's due share of the good things it contains; have due regard for the necessity of truth in all one's activities; and be particularly careful not to give way to all kinds of things which confuse and muddle the mind, such as drugs, intoxicants and idealogies which prevent the minds from seeing the truth.

* * *

A life without a guiding philosophy is narrow and selfish, producing intolerance, ignorance and prejudice. It is not a happy life. A purposeful, intelligible, meaningful life is one that is alert and active, everlearning and constantly growing.

The measure of a man is his character. Certain distinctive qualities mark an individual of character. He holds specific convictions regarding his purpose in life and in the way in which he means to live that life. He has formulated an ideal upon which he bases a personal code of ethics.

One can no more rid himself of the notion of moral law than of time or space. Moral law dominates man whether he respects it or defies it. The wise man recognises this and thereby becomes a philosopher.

Philosophy has been aptly described as "walking in the path of wisdom." It is this philosophy that gives direction to his intellectual searching and stability to his emotional being. In the case of the others, they are brought to this recognition by the society in which they live. It exercises upon him the restraint of the moral and public opinion that surround him, and prevents him from going adrift without proper bearing and consequent anti-social behaviour.

In the case of the follower of a religion, his religion moulds his character and gives it a motivation and this motivation becomes the determinant of his judgment and wisdom. The precepts of his religion contain the accumulated experience of many ages and provide the necessary guidance for the development of his character. Character involves spiritual man as well as intellectual man.

Religious understanding and commitment, a constant observance of moral principles in every phase of life are the necessary elements and expressions of character. For these to be really effective, they must be built on a deep, inner attitude towards life and living. It is this attitude that constitutes a man's philosophy.

Throughout the ages, happiness has been the object of all human endeavour. Philosophy guides men in the pursuit of what they consider happiness. But it does more than that. It also provides them with

attempts to rationalise the mystery of the universe, to translate in the language of concepts that which is inexpressible in concepts.

These attempts have resulted in varied interpretations. These differences have often led to conflicts and even wars. In the modern world, when peoples have become close neighbours through the scientific conquest of space and the technical presence of instantaneous communication, the development of true neighbourliness has become a vital necessity.

This is possible only through the promotion of global understanding. Such understanding must be philosophical, in the sense that we should be aware of the different assumptions underlying different cultures. Mankind can realise its unity only by thinking of its unity in terms of its many perspectives, expressions and experiments.

In doing this the various religions that men follow afford a profitable way of approach. The precepts of a religion provide the formulations of the good life as envisaged by its followers, the basic minimum upon which spiritual development could be built. Most historic cultures are the result of such developments that have taken place among large masses of mankind.

But not all historic cultures are religions, though they are all based on different world-views and assumptions and, therefore, on different evaluations of life. Looking back on the history of the world, it would be true to say that cultures differ mostly in affirming or denying a religious world-view.

During the last 400 years, for instance, western civilisation has become increasingly anti-religious as shown by its worship of national and social values or economic and class values. The other predominantly anti-religious civilisation was the one that developed in the last four or five centureis of the Roman Hellenistic empire.

Among the religions that have influenced the growth of cultures with spiritual values, Buddhism has been one of the most powerful, in that it has commanded the allegiance of a very large section of mankind for twenty-five centuries. Buddhism is not a "revealed religion." Its world-view differs greatly from that of revealed religions.

Revealed religions postulate a god who is absolute and who is outside the world which he has created out of nothing. This creation thus has beginning; it has also a middle and end and is, therefore, a "transitory history." Man is created in the image of God, as the subject of his actions and responsible for them. God speaks to man, revealing himself. Man's response to God is faith; by faith he participates in God's life and becomes an initiated co-worker and participant in a divine providence. If he refuses to take notice of God's revelation, he falls into nothingness and sin and his existence then becomes meaningless. He is for ever damned.

The most essential feature of man's being is the possession of a soul. It is this which distinguishes him from the beasts, who have no souls. Man's soul is a part of God himself and, therefore, permanent. If in this life man has followed God's will, the soul will, on the demise of his body, find happiness by union with God.

The will of God is expressed in commandments and dogmas given to mankind by a Prophet who is either a manifestation of God himself or one appointed by him. The accumulation of material goods is only a mean to reach a higher objective—unity with God, harmony with his creation and respect for his laws.

The teaching of the Buddha differs fundamentally from all this. There is no transcendent God, there is no personal revelation of God to man. And because man does not believe in God, he does not feel himself called upon to make everlasting commitments. Man is a creator himself and is the master and moulder of his destiny. His "self" is an endless variety of fleeting experiences and perspectives. It is a becoming, developing "self." Life is an educational task.

Buddhism seeks the meaning of life in life itself. In this search, life is ennobled. Life becomes an external and a fulfilled Now. Truth is not a revelation but a discovery. The human person has to realise itself as the subject of knowledge, as socially responsible and as artistically creative.

Buddhism has no "Thou shalt" or "Thou shalt not." Its ethics are autonomous and independent; moral problems are basically human problems. The moral law is its own foundation. Obligation to one's family or one's neighbours and such virtues as truthfulness and honesty remain objective tasks in all circumstances, they remain obligatory whether one lives up to them or not.

The moral law is identical both in individuals and societies. The state is the individual writ large. Conflict and suffering and sorrow are the result of a great delusion, the delusion of a separate Ego-entity, a self or a soul independent from individual action. There is no such thing, according to Buddhism, as an individual apart from its activities just as there is no life apart from the process of living.

Have you sent in your donation

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ASSOCIATION NEWS

FORT BUILDING FUND

The following contributions are acknowledged with thanks :—

Mr. R. K. Jasudasan, Rs. 5·00 ; Mr. T. de Alwis, Rs. Rs. 5·00 ; Mr. G. E. Senaratne, Rs. 5·00 ; Messrs. Wijesiri Stores, Hingurakgoda, Rs. 25·00 ; Messrs. Wijesiri Stores, Colombo, Rs. 2·01 ; Mr. G. W. David de Silva, Rs. 15·00 ; Mr. S. Bamunarachchi, Rs. 5·00 ; the Rev. P. Soratha, Rs. 5·00 ; The Hon Mr. K. D. de Silva, Rs. 250·00; The Rev. K. Jinasiri, Rs. 1·00; By transfer of leasehold rights of Laviniakande donated by The Hon. Sir Cyril de Zoysa, Rs. 15,000·00.

ELECTION OF BRANCH COMMITTEES

The following members were elected to the Branch Committees :—

Religious Activities Branch Committee.—Mr. L. R. Goonetilleke (Hony. Secretary), Messrs. H. D. Pieris, D. A. de Zoysa, K. A. B. Goonetilleke and Basil Gunawardene.

Religious Examinations Branch Committee.—Mr. D. S. Abeysinghe (Hony. Secretary), Messrs. D. G. de Silva, M. A. Thabrew, P. H. de Zoysa and Dr. A. D. P. Jayatilleke.

Social Service Branch Committee.—Mr. K. D. C. Goonetilleke (Hony. Secretary), Messrs. M. David de Silva, G. D. H. Wickremesinghe, G. B. Kiribamune and D. S. D. Samarasekera.

Literary Activities Branch Committee.—Mr. D. C. Sri Dillimuni (Hony. Secretary), Messrs. M. W. Karunananda, Sidat Sri Nandalochana, H. M. Gunasekere and R. G. de S. Wettimuni.

Sports Branch Committee.—Mr. K. A. F. Perera (Hony. Secretary), Messrs. B. A. Mendis, M. C. F. Abeykoon, O. A. Gunawardene and D. J. Denagama.

Dramatic Activities Branch Committee.—Mr. D. G. Edwin de Silva (Hony. Secretary), Messrs. M. S. Ratnayake, D. T. L. Guruge, P. Welikala and H. M. Gunasekere.

Vigilance Committee.—Mr. M. P. Amarasuriya (Hony. Secretary).

NEW MEMBERS

9.3.59 : Edward de Silva, 19, Barnes Place, Colombo 7 ; Victor Senaratne, 39, Pagoda Road, Nugegoda.

OBITUARY

We record with regret the death of Mr. D. C. Weerawardene.

Payment of Subscription.—A sub-committee consisting of the Hony. General Secretary, the Hony. Treasurer and Mr. L. Piyasena has been appointed to report on the suggestion to collect membership subscription in two or more instalments.

The Board of Management has also decided that hereafter notices to members warning them that their names would be struck off the roll for non-payment of subscription should be sent under registered cover.

HISTORICAL MAP

A framed copy of an historical map prepared and published by Mr. E. de Z. Gunawardene, a member, has been gifted by him to the Association. It can be seen in the Library.

SINHALA NEW YEAR AND VESAK

Sinhala New Year will be celebrated this year with a programme of national music, song and dance on Sunday, April 12, 1959. This is an annual event eagerly looked forward to by members and their families. Admission fee : 25 cents.

Vesak celebrations next month will include sermons, sil, sanghika dana with pirikara, and illuminations.

Both these functions are estimated to cost Rs. 2,000/- and the Association will be grateful to all who will help with contributions.

The success of these celebrations in the past was due to the generosity of members and friends.

NEWS & NOTES

BUDDHIST SUMMER SCHOOL 1959

The eighth annual Buddhist Summer School will again be held at "High Leigh," near Hoddesdon, in Hertfordshire, 20 miles north of the centre of London from August 29 to September 4.

A considerable amount of time will be allotted to training and practice in meditation, and there will be organized periods of silent meditation for those who wish it. Classes will be taken by the Ven. Paññāvaddho Bhikkhu and Mr. Christmas Humphreys. Mr. Phiroz Mehta, Dr. Edward Conze and Mr. Ronald Fussell are expected to be among the speakers.—*Cor.*

EASTERN FAITHS IN BRITAIN

The following appeared in "The Times of London" recently :—

"A remarkable array of oriental religions can be found—and be found to be flourishing—today in Britain. The venerable history of British Jewry is well known. But less so is the fact that, for example, it is 50 years since the arrival in London of Ananda Metteya, the first European to lead a Buddhist mission to this country, after taking the robe in Burma.

Metteya, born Allan Bennet (and a Londoner and Roman Catholic), had been drawn to the study of Buddhist scriptures by Sir Edwin Arnold's *The Light of Asia* (1879). It was only through dedicated orientalists like Max Muller, the Rhys Davidses, and the Pali Text Society (founded in 1881) that these became gradually accessible in Roman letters and in English.

The present Buddhist Society, like much else from the East, evolved out of theosophy. Today they have several hundred members, their quarterly—*The Middle Way*—is the oldest Buddhist journal in Europe, and the Penguin by Christmas Humphreys, their founder and president, has sold 150,000 copies. At their headquarters in Eccleston Square you can take classes in Zen and Teravada, and at the summer school in Hertfordshire ("Open to all who seek to find the Cause and Cure of Suffering") some 100 students gather to study "the ancient teaching that appeals to the modern mind."

Talks are also given by invitation to schoolchildren. The general secretary reports that the intensification of interest seen in the past few years has been particularly marked among young people—a phenomenon about which a conference of British missionary societies expressed considerable concern in 1957. In 12 months six young men had gone out to Siam to become monks.

There is now a separate order of English bhikkhus near Swiss Cottage, as well as the vihara off the Brompton Road—the only public temple in Britain, according to its head, the Venerable Saddhatissa. With several bhikkhus in residence (from Ceylon and Thailand), shaven-headed, sandalled and saffron-robed monks have become a common sight around Knightsbridge. As many as 50 Buddhists, the majority European, attend the evening services there. A British branch of the parent Maha Bodi Society has existed here since 1926.

BUDDHISM IN BRITAIN

"Though Buddhism is gaining more and more ground in Britain, unless and until she has her own Buddhist monks, used to the rigor of English climate and who can preach freely among their own people, one cannot rightly claim that Buddhism has taken root in this part of the world. It is an urgent need to increase the number of British Buddhist monks in response to the growing interest in Buddhism in Britain." These observations were made by Venerable Hammalawa Saddhatissa, Incumbent of London Buddhist Vihara, to day, after a simple but impressive ceremony at Swiss Cottage, London where Mr. Laurence Mills, a 26-year-old Englissh youth was ordained by him in the presence of a good gathering of European Buddhists. It is arranged that the newly ordained Samanera, Rev. Jivaka should go later to Ceylon and Siam for advanced studies and training in Buddhism at monasteries with the eventual am of returning to U.K. for dessimination of the Dhamma.—*Cor.*

CHINESE BUDDHIST STUDENTS VISIT MAHA BODHI SOCIETY HEADQUARTERS

A PARTY of Chinese Buddhist students of the Nanyang University, Singapore, led by Professor Hsu Yun-tsiao, visited the Headquarters of the Maha Bodhi Society of India in Calcutta recently.

Sri Devapriya Valisinha, General Secretary, welcomed the visitors and Dr. M. R. Soft, Vice-President, recalled his connections with the Chinese Community in Borneo.

Professor Hsu Yun-tsiao said that the ties between the Chinese and the Indians were very old and most cordial. He hoped that the two peoples would work together for the peace and prosperity of the world.

The Bhikkhus, headed by the Ven. Neluwr Jinaratane Thera, chanted pirit.—*Cor.*

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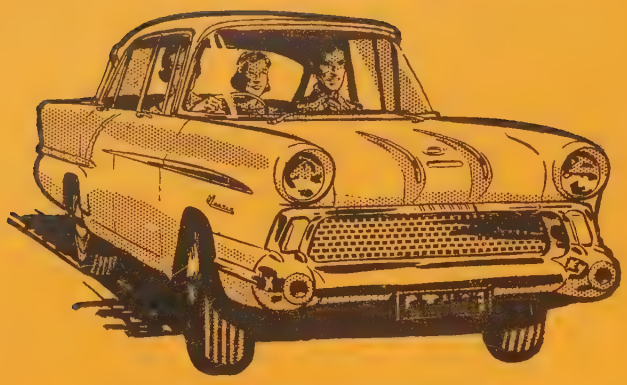

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